

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 201421

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /011 R

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DRAFTED BY ARA/LA:GECHAFIN:GMR

APPROVED BY ARA:GECHAFIN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

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INFO AMEMBASSY NASSAU IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 201421

FOR ASST SECRETARY ROGERS

FOL REPEAT MONTEVIDEO 2904 SENT ACTION SECSTATE AUG 21

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 2904

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, UY

SUBJECT: THIRD COUNTRY ISSUES--PANAMA AND CUBA

REF: MVD 2495 AND 2841

1. IN RESPONSE TO YOUR INQUIRY WE GAVE IN REFTELS OUR ESTIMATE OF GOU ATTITUDES ON THIRD COUNTRY ISSUES, INCLUDING PANAMA AND CUBA. YESTERDAY WHILE CALLING ON FONMINISTER BLANCO WITH USIA DIRECTOR KEOGH I INTRODUCED SUBJECT OF PANAMA. BLANCO'S COMMENTS VERY CLOSELY PARALLELED OUR ANALYSIS OF GOU ATTITUDES AS REPORTED. HOWECER, AS THIS IS SUCH A VITAL ISSUE, I THINK I SHOULD GIVE YOU, WITH DIRECT ATTRIBUTION TO THE FONMINISTER, WHAT BLANCO SAID IS THE GOU POSITION.

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PAGE 02 STATE 201421

2. IN THE FIRST PLACE HE SAID HE THOUGHT THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S POLICY WITH RESPECT TO PANAMA WAS THE CORRECT ONE AND THAT IT SHOULD PURSUE WITH ALL VIGOR ITS EFFORT TO ACHIEVE A MODERN TREATY ARRANGEMENT WITH PANAMA AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE. ON THE

OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN HE ALSO SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA NOT ONLY PASSIONATELY BELIEVED THAT A MODERN TREATY IS JUSTLY REQUIRED BUT ALSO THAT IT IS TRYING IN GOOD FAITH TO ACHIEVE A TREATY WITH THE US. HE SAID HE HAD DISCUSSED THIS AT LENGTH WITH FONMIN TACK LAST MAY IN WASHINGTON. ON THE ISSUE OF INTERNATIONAL LAW ALONE, HE SAID, THE CASE COULD PROBABLY BE MADE THAT THE US HAD UNDENIABLE RIGHTS TO CONTINUE AS AT PRESENT--BUT HE THOUGHT THAT ON POLITICAL GROUNDS AND ON GROUNDS OF EQUITY THIS WOULD BE A VERY SHORTSIDED AND COUNTERPRODUCTIVE POLICY. IT WAS EVIDENT THAT HE APPLIES THIS JUDGEMENT TO THE VIEW OF THOSE IN THE US WHO SO ADAMANTLY OPPOSE NEGOTIATION AND OR RATIFICATION OF A MODERN TREATY. AS FAR AS URUGUAY ITSELF IS CONCERNED, HE SAID, THE CANAL--AND THE ISSUE OF PANAMA--IS NOT A VERY IMPORTANT ONE. IN THIS REGARD HE THOUGHT THAT URUGUAY WAS PRETTY MUCH LIKE OTHERS OF THE SOUTHERN-MOST SOUTH AMERICAN NATIONS, AND HE NOTED THAT THE DEGREE OF PASSION REGARDING PANAMA SEEMS TO BEAR A CLEAR RELATIONSHIP TO PROXIMITY TO PANAMA AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CANAL TO A PARTICULAR COUNTRY'S TRADE ROUTES. AS REGARDS URUGUAY, HE SAID, THE CANAL IS NOT REALLY VERY IMPORTANT AS ITS TRADE ROUTES DO NOT DEPEND ON IT. BUT ON A POLITICAL LEVEL, HE SAID, PANAMA IS AN ISSUE FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF URUGUAY AND IT MUST ALIGN ITSELF IN SYMPATHY WITH PANAMANIAN ASPIRATION AND IN SOLIDARITY WITH LA SUPPORT FOR THOSE ASPIRATIONS. AS FOR WHAT WOULD BE REQUIRED, BLANCO SAID THAT WE SHOULD GO AS FAR AS POSSIBLE TO MEET PANAMANIAN ASPIRATIONS FOR SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE CANAL, FOR SEEING THEIR FLAG FLYING THERE, FOR RECOVERING REAL CONTROL OVER ALL NATIONAL TERRITORY AND FOR HAVING THE MAXIMUM OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLOIT THE COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY THE CANAL AND TO BENEFIT FROM IT FINANCIALLY AS A NATIONAL ASSET. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE SAID, URUGUAY, AND HE WAS CONFIDENT OTHERS WOULD NO WISH TO SEE THE US ELIMINATED FROM RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SECURITY OF THE CANAL AND FOR ITS EFFICIENT OPERATION.

3. BLANCO TOUCHED ONLY LIGHTLY ON THE ISSUE OF CUBA. HE EXPLAINED THE WELLKNOWN GOU VIEW THAT CUBA REMAINS GUILTY OF EXPORTING SUBVERSION IN GENERAL AND SPECIFICALLY AGAINST URUGUAY. HE FELT THAT CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 201421

CASTRO SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE MORAL VICTORY WHICH THE LIFTING OF SANCTIONS--IN THE WAY IN WHICH IT WAS DONE--DID GIVE HIM. HE NONETHELESS STATED THAT HE AND PRESIDENT BORDABERRY UNDERSTOOD THE US POSITION AND THE IMPORTANCE OF SETTING THE CUBA ISSUE ASIDE AS A DEVISIVE ONE FOR THE HEMISPHERE AND FOR THE OAS ITSELF. SIRACUSA

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 26 AUG 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE201421
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: ARA/LA:GECHAFIN:GMR
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D750292-0108
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t197508101/baaaasxv.tel
Line Count: 108
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 SEP 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <04 DEC 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 971006
Subject: n/a
TAGS: PFOR, CU, PN, US, UY, PFOR, (BLANCO, JUAN CARLOS)
To: NAVFAC ELEUTHERA INFO NASSAU
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006